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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 10 October 1991, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. AL-NI'MAH (Vice-President)	(Qatar)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)

- SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

- ADDRESS BY MR. GUILLERMO ENDARA GALIMANY, CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

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- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Pursoo (Grenada)
Mr. Dumbuya (Sierra Leone)

Address by the Honourable Tofilau Eti Alesana, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Western Sahara

Statements made by

Mr. Ndong (Equatorial Guinea)
Mr. Jaakson (Estonia)
Mr. Taveras Guzman (Dominican Republic)

- Statement by the President

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 114 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to document A/46/474/Add.2, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General informing me that since the issuance of his communications dated 17 September 1991 and 10 October 1991 Sierra Leone has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

ADDRESS BY MR. GUILLERMO ENDARA GALIMANY, CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Constitutional President of the Republic of Panama.

Mr. Guillermo Endara Galimany, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Constitutional President of the Republic of Panama,

Mr. Guillermo Endara Galimany, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President ENDARA GALIMANY (interpretation from Spanish): The Republic of Panama is deeply gratified at the election of Mr. Samir Shihabi as President of the General Assembly, and we are confident that under his able guidance this forty-sixth session of the Assembly will be one of great importance for our Organization.

The work of his predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, has laid the bases upon which to deal with the changes called for by the new international situation.

My people are very happy at the admission of the new Members. We have always maintained cordial relations with the Republic of Korea, and we now have the hope that the Korean peninsula will be reunified. The Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia are our neighbours of that Pacific Ocean which has linked us with Asia for so many centuries. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania constitute an example of faith and courage in regard to liberation, culminating in recognition by the international community. We are fully confident that at the next session of the General Assembly we shall have another new Member as a result of the plebiscite to be conducted in Western Sahara under the auspices of the United Nations to secure the right of self-determination for the Saharan people.

(President Endara Galimany)

A year ago, from this rostrum, I gave a brief account of the recent history of our Republic. The vicissitudes we have experienced can be understood only in the light of our internal reality, which quite often is ill understood in certain circles. On that occasion I sought to emphasize certain of the national values we treasure. Among these are our love for democracy, our commitment to human dignity and our devotion to individual freedoms. On the other side of the coin is our aversion to poverty, sectarianism and disease. In defence of those values, and in the struggle against those scourges, the Republic of Panama will always be prepared to contribute, with honesty and determination, not only domestically but also as a member of the world community.

A year ago we were looking forward to the opportunity of enjoying an era of peace and cooperation between nations. Today we are beginning to build the road to a new society for mankind. Here, the relationship between the super-Powers could prove to be an effective instrument. We understand that this is a complex situation, but we observe that positive results have already emerged with regard to relations among States and the freedom of peoples. The changes in the Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe and in Asia give rise to optimism, and they should prompt us to cooperation. The international community understands this and is supporting the positive change. For the Republic of Panama, the establishment of diplomatic and consular relations with the Soviet Union is the door to a new and significant relationship on the eve of the twenty-first century.

It is in the framework of this flowering of freedom that we must confront the crises presented by national identities. Those crises are as

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understandable as were the divisions that ensued upon our independence from Spain in the last century. As part of greater Colombia, we lived through the dismemberment of a dream and the confinement of a continental vision. Today we are trying to recapture these, having paid the high price of fragmentation.

Against this background, we view with concern and pain the struggles of Yugoslavia. We are aware of the roots of the ethnic problem but, at the same time, we harbour the hope that the centrifugal forces of development will overcome the fragmentationist forces of division, both in that country and in the emerging regions of Africa.

Peace in the Middle East calls for a new tolerance between Israel and the Arab countries. A conference to examine the present situation and to help to overcome decades of enmity is essential. It is necessary not only for the region and for the peace of the planet but also for the sake of programmes aimed at the salvation of mankind and the defence of our environment. The surest road to a lasting peace is a negotiated solution that will satisfy the specific aspirations of all the peoples concerned.

Our Government has closely followed political developments in southern Africa. We believe that a serious effort is being made to revise the apartheid system. The Pretoria Government has adopted significant measures that call for impartial study, taking into account the interests of the South African peoples. A solution should be sought that is more in tune with the present international situation.

If the political problems of Europe and the eastern Mediterranean are of unquestionable importance to us all, I wish to refer to two other obstacles that we must overcome in this Organization and within each State. I refer to the poverty of man and to the impoverishment of the environment. Poverty is

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making inroads every day. In the developing countries 1,000 million people are living in conditions of dire need. In South America and the Caribbean more than half the population is having difficulty surviving. In the developed countries, statistics conceal broad areas of human misery in the midst of apparently general wealth. The efforts of the United Nations to reduce poverty are worthy of praise and support. In our subcontinent the United Nations Development Programme and the regional projects concerning critical poverty help us to tackle the problem, but they are not sufficient. They must be supplemented with other measures of international cooperation.

We in Panama have adopted a set of measures in the framework of a national strategy to reduce poverty. These include projects over the next five years focusing on health, education, housing and employment, with the emphasis on programmes for mother-and-child nourishment, popular housing and job creation. The support of non-governmental organizations has been demonstrably important and constitutes a mechanism for extra-governmental participation without which the democratic process would be incomplete.

We shall ensure that next century's world is better than this one if we understand that we cannot create in one part of society wealth that is based on poverty in another part - either internationally or nationally. Relationships between North and South must change on the basis of mutual respect and acceptance of the just value that human labour deserves in every region. We need a new approach to the prices of our commodities. We need truly to expand international trade and investment. We need a generous vision concerning the use and distribution of wealth. This is a matter not of

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paternalism but of justice. For that reason it is important that trade negotiations in the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade should not become bogged down, and it is vital that regional economic groups should not become so many more zones of protectionism.

Last year I suggested that a decade against poverty should be declared with a view to checking the spread of poverty, disease and ignorance around the world. Today, in recognizing the efforts of the United Nations in this noble endeavour, I insist that we move forward and that the new era of international cooperation should extend to the poor.

We are all concerned about the deterioration of the environment and about the harmful consequences that that may have for present and future generations. We Panamanians are doubly concerned because of our position, because of the nature of our natural resources and because of the impact that their deterioration would have for the planet, but especially for Panama.

(President Endara Galimany)

We live between two seas united by a canal. The canal is at the same time a Panamanian resource and an instrument of world trade. Our fisheries encompass the Greater Caribbean and the Humboldt Current. We are literally the forward defence of Amazonia. Our Darien area has for several decades constituted a resource reserve of the first order. It is governed in the Pacific and Atlantic areas by organizations with the participation on an equal footing of all groups of indigenous peoples living there. They are represented at every level of Government, from local municipalities to the national Legislative Assembly.

Upsetting the ecological balance in this area would affect fisheries in both oceans, the operation of the Canal and interocean trade.

My Government placed these facts on record at the recent meeting in Madrid. I wish to state decisively before this body the urgent necessity of quantifying the value of those reserves for mankind. They should be taken advantage of by all equally, by those of the North and those of the South, so that the land may have neither owners nor exploiters.

The painful measures that we small countries are taking in this area call for the cooperation of the developed countries in both the technical and economic spheres.

Aware of the implicit danger for all mankind, we have adopted the measures recommended by this Organization concerning dumping and incineration of toxic and dangerous waste in the region of the Greater Caribbean. We have also taken special precautions in the transport of oil and other chemicals that pass through the Canal. We are committed to the protection of our water resources and especially the preservation of the hydrographic basin of the Canal.

(President Endara Galimany)

The World Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in 1992, will be of decisive importance on this topic and Panama supports all necessary measures to assure its success.

The military Government that preceded my own ceased to comply with the obligations of the State towards international organizations and other creditors. It had no other purpose than illicit enrichment and the waste of national capital. Thus, it neither paid the debts it had contracted nor encouraged the development of the economy.

My Government was obliged simultaneously to tackle unemployment, declining investments, an incomprehensible political hostility and the payment of the debt we inherited from the previous regime. Our efforts have in an orderly fashion produced some concrete results because our domestic economy is recovering. The fiscal situation is gradually becoming normalized. We have already achieved agreements with international financial bodies and with the countries of the Paris Club. Finally, we have prepared a programme of economic adjustment to free our economy within the plan of international cooperation, restructuring of debt and new plans for investment.

Our decision gradually and in a complementary way to become part of the Central American group is based on the trend towards regional grouping. We are furthermore convinced that the countries of the area are moving in a democratic direction. We are proceeding cautiously, but our decision demonstrates a firm political will. We are aware of our function as a link to the South American continent, to which we are bound by centuries of relationships, and to a Caribbean area that has since colonial times been related to us by blood, customs and interests.

(President Endara Galimany)

The Panama Canal is preparing to be Panamanian not only in name but in reality as of 31 December 1999. It should be stated in this body that, contrary to what is sometimes heard, the Republic of Panama is preparing itself responsibly for the administration of this national resource, which also constitutes a resource of mankind.

It has always been said to date that the land was ours and the capital belonged to the United States. The work conducted in the Culebra Cut at the cost of more than $200 million, which was necessary for several years, was paid for by the collection of tolls through the Canal; what amounts to the same thing, Panama has made the economic sacrifice implied by waiving that income from now until the year 2000. This participation is proof of our seriousness.

Moreover, the Republic of Panama is working out a mechanism that will allow us to engage in cooperation with users so that the Canal can fulfil its double function as a national resource and as an international instrument. We hope to be able to submit an original plan at the second Ibero-American Summit at Madrid as a Panamanian contribution to the great community of peoples linked by the two great oceans.

I have not forgotten that here a year ago I committed the Panamanian Government to the cause of freedom in our neighbouring country, Haiti. International determination and the Haitian will for freedom led to an historic election in which a humble citizen was constitutionally elected President.

We know what Haiti feels today. We know that a handful of arrogant soldiers are doing the same thing in Port-au-Prince that other arrogant soldiers did in Panama two years ago.

(President Endara Galimany)

We are here to state clearly that a democratic government cannot permit, for whatever reason, the flouting of the popular will in this manner, not in Haiti, not in Panama nor in any part of the world. All the statements about poverty, underdevelopment or equality would be meaningless if we were to allow the will of the people freely expressed in exemplary elections to be defied, if we were to allow the heroes of Haitian freedom to be defeated by sophistry that has nothing to do with reality.

(President Endara Galimany)

I have left this point for the end of my statement because it has to do not only with the situation of a small Caribbean country; it also has a direct relationship with our efforts to restructure the United Nations and to create a new world order based on justice.

Here we have heard applause for the statements of those who have advocated the supremacy of a fair international order over internal injustice. As recently as Monday, the King of Spain moved the Assembly when, on behalf of his ancient kingdom he said, and I quote, "... human rights are not the internal problem of any country".

The tragedy in Haiti is something known to all Ibero-Americans, as well as many Africans, many Asians and many Europeans. The enjoyment of freedom involves the commitment to defend everyone's freedom; otherwise we run the risk of excluding ourselves from civilized society.

My Government supports all necessary measures to restore constitutional order in Haiti. We would do the same in any other case; we accept no formal concessions that betray the will of the people.

In the Organization of American States, we have maintained an unequivocal position in order that the tragedy that my country experienced in 1989 will not be repeated in any other country. The Organization of American States cannot fail in its duty to re-establish democracy in Haiti. This would endanger democracy in this continent and would undermine the existence of that organization.

Therefore, the Panamanian delegation has consistently made clear its willingness to support any measure that could contribute efficiently and effectively to the restoration of democracy in Haiti. I am not upholding a false concept of the principle of non-intervention, for sovereignty is founded

(President Endara Galimany)

on the self-determination of a people, not that of any Government. I note with pleasure that on the initiative of the Latin American and Caribbean Group the General Assembly will shortly be considering a resolution expressing the concern and solidarity that our peoples and Governments feel for Haitian democracy.

It is customary for the President of Brazil to open the general debate. Today, for the first time, a Head of State will close it. It is significant that, following a large country, a small one like ours should make the final statement. Humanity is not a question of size. We have the Netherlands, Greece, Switzerland and Japan as timeless reminders of the strength of the small countries.

On behalf of my Government and all the peoples who have benefited from his constant concern for the peace and well-being of all nations, I wish to pay a sincere tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. He has courageously taken up the reforms of the Organization. He has left the proof of his dedication and his ability in Afghanistan, the Middle East, Cambodia, Cyprus and Central America, to mention only a few places. Panama offers him, as always, all its support, so that the record may show that we recognize his life as one devoted first to the service of his country and then to the service of mankind.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Constitutional President of the Republic of Panama for the statement he has just made and for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Guillermo Endara Galimany, Constitutional President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (concluded)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. PURSOO (Grenada): It is with profound pleasure that my delegation conveys to the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly the greetings of the Government and people of Grenada. It is our special honour to extend congratulations to you on your election to the presidency of this forty-sixth session. We are well aware, Mr. President, of your outstanding qualities and competence, and we are confident that you will guide the work of this session in a most exemplary manner. We also wish to congratulate Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta for the efficient manner in which he conducted the affairs of the forty-fifth session.

The commendations of my Government are extended to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his indefatigable efforts in the service of the United Nations.*

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* Mr. Al-Nimah (Qatar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Pursoo, Grenada)

My delegation is also happy to extend a warm welcome to the new Members of the United Nations: the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republics of the Marshall Islands, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Surely this impressive list of new Members is testimony to the profound political changes now taking place throughout the world. The Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands have recently gained their independence. The Koreas have finally overcome decades of exclusion from membership of the United Nations, a condition that has for some time been politically untenable and wholly unrelated to their independent status. The Baltic States have, so to speak, regained their independence.

Freedom, justice and democracy have again won a splendid victory.

It is now almost eight years since Grenada was liberated from an ideology which was alien to our political culture. Each year has posed new challenges to national reconstruction and to the well-being of our people. Indeed, these have been difficult years, and, while we have achieved some measure of progress, our people are aware that even bigger hurdles to national development lie ahead.

Since late 1983 we have focused on the rebuilding of our economy and the restoration of the democratic institutions enshrined in our Constitution. In fact, in August this year Grenada restored those provisions of our Constitution held in abeyance since their suspension in March 1979, thus returning our nation to full constitutional rule. In a related move, Grenada returned to the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court System. These two accomplishments once again guarantee the full constitutional rights of our

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citizens. We have held two peaceful and free general elections. Previous Governments have done, and my Government is doing, much to cultivate political stability, which would cause our nationals, tourists and foreign investors to be anxious to do business with and in our beautiful country.

Our domestic policies are aimed primarily at encouraging individuals, cooperatives and businesses to maximize the returns on their enterprise and efforts. At the same time, we seek to enhance opportunities for our working people to attain higher standards of living, through individual initiative and by building the virtue of self-reliance.

The political peace we have dutifully created is now being supported by a comprehensive development strategy, as contained in our first Medium-Term National Development Action Plan. We have set ourselves a number of targets, which include balanced and integrated sectoral growth; strategic human resource planning and development; a positive work ethic and a disciplined, healthy and skilled work force; a relevant and adaptive education system; enjoyment of all guaranteed constitutional rights and freedoms; and a peaceful and stable industrial relations climate.

My Government knows well the frustrations inflicted by very limited resources. Our people know the disappointment and pain of unfulfilled expectations. None the less, both Government and people recognize the need for sacrifice and patience as together we struggle to produce larger quantities of goods and services at more economical and competitive prices. Alas, however, we are constrained by the forces of the international financial and commodities markets.

(Mr. Pursoo, Grenada)

My Government is convinced that the rate of development of Grenada - indeed, of any small island country - is a function of international economic and political trends. Although to a considerable extent the characterization of this phenomenon as global interdependence is apt, we must not lose sight of the blatant imbalances in economic and social development worldwide. Most importantly, we cannot be timid in speaking to the issue of the special circumstances of small island developing countries.

The case for official development assistance and the transfer of real resources from the North to the South has never been as strong as it is today. Massive debt burden, loss of earnings due to drastic declines in prices for raw-material exports, persistent poverty and marginalized economies are salient throughout the so-called third world. We in Grenada are creeping under the weight of debt and the pressure of economic difficulties. We recognize, however, that corrective action cannot be taken in isolation from non-national factors and actors.

Maximum efforts are obviously required of us. It is unfortunate, however, that most of our people have to look to Government for their well-being, and continue to do so precisely at a time when the national economy cannot satisfy many of their reasonable expectations. We believe, though, that economic restructuring has its merit and holds the promise of a more secure economic future.

As individual developing countries embark upon such programmes, Grenada contends that enlightened support from international financial institutions is absolutely necessary. Debt forgiveness must be seen as a sensible option, as must new concessionary flows of official development assistance. The provision of special trade and investment regimes in favour of developing

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countries is vital to the economic viability of small States in particular at this time. Furthermore, the economic adjustments being undertaken require assistance to address the social costs of such adjustments.

The vigorous creation and consolidation of regional economic blocs carry with them new sources of unease and new challenges to small States. While the economic logic and rationale for this development might be unassailable, Grenada appeals for special consideration for the products of traditional suppliers. If guaranteed access is replaced by unbridled price competition, without any compensatory mechanisms, social and political chaos will ravage the developing countries. The market-place has no social conscience.

The need for economic survival is no more acute in the newly free States of Europe than it is in the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa or Asia. Development, like poverty, does not discriminate between cultures. Grenada calls upon all States to pursue the drawing up of an equitable international development strategy. There is a clear need for strong multilateral initiatives within existing, but revitalized and reformed, agencies of the United Nations. These agencies should be specifically mandated and financially furnished to provide for the development needs of poor countries.

(Mr. Pursoo, Grenada)

We speak perceptively in international forums of the globalization of the world economy and the concept of global interdependence. For many decades industrialization and the technological revolution provided vast quantities of goods and services, which made possible the rapid economic advancement of some countries. For many years too, poverty and hunger permanently resided with others, where millions of people eked out a meagre livelihood from limited natural resources. The cost of this twin phenomenon is present today in environmental degradation. The problems are global; the responsibilities are global: firm corrective action therefore requires a coordinated global strategy.

It is in this context that Grenada looks forward to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in 1992. We believe that the challenge to diplomacy and international law-making cannot be shirked. Restoring and maintaining a sense of balance between economic development and environmental preservation require equitable and effective international legal instruments. It is our hope that, apart from the negotiation and conclusion of conventions on climate change and the preservation of biodiversity, the special concerns and needs of small States will meet with genuine understanding and firm pledges of assistance.

Grenada calls upon the international community not to relax its efforts to convince the industrialized countries, in particular, of the need to take urgent steps to save the environment. Small States must be assisted to find alternatives that will enable them to enjoy the beauty of the environment, rather than be forced to plunder its resources merely for survival. Let us go to Brazil with the political will and the commitment to save our planet and ourselves.

(Mr. Pursoo, Grenada)

The English-speaking Caribbean region is relatively peaceful and stable at this time. These conditions enable our countries to intensify the search for deeper forms of economic and political integration.

Grenada wishes to reiterate its position that the economic and social prosperity of the people of the region is heavily dependent upon the success of our integration movement. In recent years we have regained much of the political commitment necessary for the advancement and consolidation of the integration process, and Grenada is confident that the renewed vigour and momentum will be sustained.

Undoubtedly, the bright prospects of improved welfare and security have impelled the leaders of the island States and the Commonwealth of Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada to engage all sectors of the community in a careful and serious search for a viable form of political union among the four island States of the subregion. Our hopes are high that we shall be able to define ourselves as one people and to fashion an appropriate constitutional authority to provide for our orderly and progressive governance.

Grenada believes that the need to take steps to strengthen the integration process in the wider Caribbean and in Latin America is becoming more urgent, given the pace and scope of global change. In this context we note the special role being played by Venezuela and Mexico and the recent proposal advanced by Honduras. Further cooperation and collaboration between countries of the region will no doubt serve to promote hemispheric unity.

Grenada welcomes, with pleasure, the easing of tensions between Belize and Guatemala. The recent declaration by the Government of Guatemala that it recognizes Belize's right to independence and self-determination is very

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encouraging. So too is the news that the two countries have established diplomatic relations. We look forward to an amiable and definitive resolution of remaining difficulties between the two parties on the basis of the principles of mutual respect and good-neighbourliness.

The Government of Grenada deplores, in the strongest possible terms, the recent overthrow of the duly elected President of Haiti. Grenada believes that no comfort should be provided to the military junta which has seized power for its own selfish ends, in disregard of the will of the Haitian people for democracy, peace and progress. We call upon the international community to bring adequate pressure to bear on the military junta so that constitutional rule may be restored in Haiti. It is imperative that the international community give special attention to the existing problem regarding Haitian refugees. This has become even more urgent given the current situation there.

There are some who appear to believe that the political process now unfolding inside South Africa requires their immediate economic endorsement. Grenada notes, with some measure of relief, the abrogation of some of the legislative pillars of the apartheid system. But the motion of the process of fundamental constitutional change is very slow. So far none of the recognized rights and freedoms has been guaranteed to the black majority. Grenada reiterates its position that until that preferred goal is attained economic sanctions should be maintained so as to bring about the total demise of apartheid. My Government is also disturbed over the continuing violence in the black townships and deplores the perpetuation by some agencies of such road-blocks to the realization of a democratic South Africa.

(Mr. Pursoo, Grenada)

The overall situation in the Middle East remains unsettled. In the aftermath of the Gulf War new opportunities for peace have emerged. Grenada supports the proposed Middle East Conference. In recent times there have been some noteworthy signs of positive movement and it is hoped that full advantage will be taken of the opportunity to settle the long-standing differences between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The Government of Grenada has viewed with relief the demise of communism in Europe. Eastern Europe generally and the Soviet Union in particular have experienced the power of democracy. We believe that the so-called newly free States of Europe are a historic prize for the discharge of the cold war. That prize has gone, deservedly, to the people.

(Mr. Pursoo, Grenada)

As the world feels its way in an era of seeming unipolarity, the security concerns of small States again come to the fore. The quest for security absorbs substantial economic resources that small States can ill afford. The vulnerability of small States may be defined not only in terms of direct attacks against territorial integrity but also in terms of the pervasive conditions of poverty and economic powerlessness. Regional cooperation arrangements provide an option, but it is respect for the independence of States, the right of their peoples to self-determination, and compliance with the rules of international law that constitute the best guarantee of security for small States. In the new international environment, Grenada sees the United Nations as having an even more vital role to play in buttressing the security and political independence of small States.

The problems posed by the production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs cannot be wished away. Indeed, the very security of small States can be exposed and compromised by the violent and indiscriminate onslaught of the drug culture. Equally disturbing is its capacity to retard the development of our countries to the extent that it demands and consumes considerable resources that could otherwise be utilized more productively.

Grenada is determined to persevere in the fight. We have introduced a number of national programmes in this area and have entered into bilateral cooperation agreements with friendly countries. My Government is of the view that regional and international agencies mandated to work in this field should receive the maximum support of Member States. The drug problem is global. The response must, of necessity, be global in scope.

The decade of the 1990s continues to impose itself on the international community as if commissioned to effect political, economic and social change

(Mr. Pursoo, Grenada)

worldwide. Happily, democracy and freedom have been the major beneficiaries. From Grenada's perspective, we hope that our national development efforts will not be derailed but, in fact, will receive meaningful support from international financial institutions and friendly countries. It is our hope also that the new spirit of international cooperation will be consolidated and deepened so as to enhance the prospect for peace. The United Nations must be the focal point of international activity. This forty-sixth session of the General Assembly must play its part in providing opportunities for, and facilitating decisions among, the community of nations so as to advance the cause of peace and secure reasonable levels of sustained development, especially in the developing countries.

Mr. DUMBUYA (Sierra Leone): It is with great pleasure, that on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone, I congratulate Mr. Samir Shihabi on his election to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. This is deserved testimony to, and appreciation of, his proven qualities and skills as a seasoned diplomat and a worthy son of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a country with which we have always maintained cordial and friendly relations. Let me assure him of my delegation's fullest cooperation as the Assembly, under his leadership, forges ahead in the search for solutions to the problems confronting us. I should also like to pay a tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Guido De Marco, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, under whose efficient direction the forty-fifth session made much progress.

The principle of universality, for long the aim of the Charter, gained added significance with the recent admission of seven States, including Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, into our midst. For

(Mr. Dumbuya, Sierra Leone)

them, membership must be the fulfilment of an aspiration to the attainment of self-determination. Similarly, we extend a hand of welcome and cooperation to the Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, whose independence and territorial integrity have been restored. There States have once again become vibrant actors on the international stage. We equally welcome the admission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, an outcome that my Government had consistently supported over the past few years. It is our belief and hope that their presence in this international forum will be used to further their shared goal of eventual reunification. We congratulate all the new Members and note that by their membership the social and cultural diversity of the Organization is further enriched.

We meet at this forty-sixth session on the crest of a tidal wave of significant developments, whose ramifications are yet to be fully understood. Poised as we are on what promises to be a new era, we must admit that these are exciting, yet challenging, times: exciting, because they offer an opportunity for a change in direction, or even new beginnings, in the conduct of international relations; challenging, because of the possible consequences of a wrong choice.

It has been said in this very Hall that we cannot allow the emerging world order to evolve by itself. We must fashion it, nurture it and imbue it with those qualities or characteristics that will best serve us in the coming years. The nascent world order must therefore be seen as an offspring of our collective volition and effort. Consequently, the overriding premise should be that the prerequisites of such a new world order must be clearly understood

(Mr. Dumbuya, Sierra Leone)

and the rights, duties and obligations of States within the context of its application must be clearly spelt out. What we must fashion is not a tenuous arrangement of uneven quality, but a compact of free nations, whose conduct will truly be sanctioned by the Charter and held accountable to the peoples of the world.

(Mr. Dumbuya, Sierra Leone)

Invariably, the outcome of our efforts will depend largely on whether we are determined to make an auspicious start, whether we are resolved to shed those attitudes which have hitherto frustrated conflict resolution, inhibited peace-making or stifled economic development. We must be convinced of the efficacy of a progressively liberal and democratic approach whose underpinnings should be political flexibility, social compromise and clear economic vision.

The situation in South Africa has been one of our agenda items for many years now. As a result of sustained internal and international pressure, the present South AFrican Administration has enacted legislation to remove certain obnoxious laws from the statute books. However, apartheid is still firmly rooted in that country, and therefore it will be an error of judgement on our part if we fail to maintain pressure on the South African Government.

President De Klerk's constitutional proposals are designed above all to ensure that the majority of the people will never be able to exercise effective political power. Clearly, one cannot take seriously a system that makes it mandatory for a coalition Government to be formed irrespective of the outcome of elections. These proposals cannot form the basis for negotiations. At the same time, evidence has come to light confirming the suspicion of many that the Pretoria regime continues to coordinate the destructive wave of violence engulfing South Africa, particularly the African townships. The international community must continue to be vigilant and sustain pressure on the South African regime until the majority of the people of that country are able to determine how and by whom they should be governed. The retention of constitutional safeguards is one thing, but the perpetration of racism cannot be tolerated.

(Mr. Dumbuya, Sierra Leone)

We are elated at the ongoing peace process in Angola and the cessation of hostilities between the warring parties, and we look forward to the emergence of a united Angolan people. We call upon the people of Mozambique to end the bloody conflict that has wrought so much suffering on the poor and innocent, particularly the women and children. We laud the efforts of all countries, particularly those of the subregion, in their bid to find a solution to the crisis in that country.

With reference to the problems in Western Sahara, we see in the United Nations Mission a final step on the road to resolving the conflict in that territory.

Over the years, my delegation has paid tribute to the courage, patience and fortitude of the Cambodian people in their adversity. Today we witness the result of those qualities in the establishment of a Supreme National Council under the leadership of His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk, which crystallizes the consensus of the Cambodian people to come to terms with the future direction of their society in order to resume their place on the international scene.

We are convinced that the healing process, after years of conflict, has begun, and with it will come the realization that the lessons of the past will forge the Cambodian people's determination as they march towards their destiny.

My delegation welcomes the convening of an international conference on the Middle East which will address the Palestinian question and the wider Arab-Israeli conflict. It has always been the view of this delegation that the Palestinians are entitled to a homeland within secure borders, where they can exercise their inalienable rights as a people. Therefore it should be the objective of all participants at that conference to achieve a comprehensive

(Mr. Dumbuya, Sierra Leone)

peace settlement that will ensure that all the countries of that region live in peace with one another within secure borders.

Many people now agree that the African crisis is basically political in nature, with serious economic and social consequences. It is against that background that my President, Major-General Dr. Joseph Saidu Momoh, in August last year set the scene for greater participation in politics by the people of Sierra Leone as well as a greater democratization of the political process. After 13 years of one-party rule, a multi-party constitution is now in place, and at the next election, scheduled to take place within a year, the people of Sierra Leone will have the opportunity of choosing those whom they would want to govern them. However, for multi-party democracy to function effectively, Governments in our situation must be assisted to eradicate hunger, poverty and illiteracy, as the continued existence of deprivation of the majority of our peoples is likely to impact negatively on the democratic process.

While Sierra Leoneans rejoice at the smooth and peaceful transition from a single-party to a multi-party constitution, our country continues to be invaded by rampaging bandits of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia. This aggression has resulted in the loss of lives of thousands of our people and the displacement of many more, thereby compounding the serious refugee problem we already have.

We believe in the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all nations, irrespective of their size and wealth. Our participation in the United Nations coalition against Iraq following the latter's invasion of Kuwait last year is an eloquent demonstration of our belief in the preservation of the territorial integrity of States. Sierra Leone is, therefore, determined to repel the invasion of the eastern and southern parts of its territory by the

(Mr. Dumbuya, Sierra Leone)

marauding bandits of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia and appeals to the international community for support to alleviate the suffering of both our displaced citizens and the refugees from Liberia. We should also like to place on record our appreciation of the tremendous assistance rendered to us by the Governments of the Republic of Guinea, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the United States of America, the People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom and other friendly countries.

In a new world economic order where we see progress, achievement, growth and self-sufficiency in other parts of the world, we in Africa, particularly in the sub-Saharan region, continue to be marginalized, with our ailing economies deteriorating by geometrical progression. We continue to flounder in external debts, and there appears to be a calculated intention to keep us submerged. Programmes intended to salvage our economies and serve as a panacea for our economic woes meet with little or no support from the international community. Therefore they fail, and they fail dismally at that. A case in point is the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, which at its launching had every indication of being a viable and potentially successful economic recovery programme. Today, four years after its inception, many African countries are mired in more economic difficulties than ever before.

(Mr. Dumbuya, Sierra Leone)

Our Heads of State, at their meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, last June, signed a Treaty establishing an African economic community with the objective of creating opportunities for economic development through cooperation. We shall fail again in this venture if the requisite international economic atmosphere is not created. There is therefore an urgent need for a volte-face by the developed nations in their attitude towards some or all of the causes of our economic problems as we see them: low commodity prices, a heavy external-debt burden, limited transfer of resources and technology, and emerging protectionist trade blocs. We call upon the developed countries to integrate the economies of our countries into the multilateral trade system, thus creating an opportunity for our impaired economies to establish productive trade links with more buoyant ones.

To this end, we need, among other things, a re-examination of the increasingly difficult international economic environment prevailing at the moment. It is my delegation's view that if an improvement in the world's economy is to be assured the international community must recognize the need for concerted action. Many countries in Africa have embarked on the process of stabilizing their economies and introducing structural adjustment programmes. This process is no doubt a painful one for the majority of our people, who have to contend with reduced social services. It is therefore essential that the question of the debt burden and other related issues affecting the developing countries be seriously examined.

It is widely accepted that, for Africa, the last decade was a lost decade. Now that there is an improved climate of political cooperation, we need to pursue very actively and constructively the North-South dialogue on burning economic issues. Even if the entire world were at peace, we could not

(Mr. Dumbuya, Sierra Leone)

afford to look on helplessly as, every day, a large part of the population of our planet goes to sleep hungry.

The international community is currently engaged in a debate about protection of the environment. This comes after years of indifference to the ravages that man has wrought on his surroundings.

Admittedly, across the entire spectrum, rather intense views are being voiced about the extent of certain aspects of environmental degradation - what activities are the most destructive; the impact of a comprehensive environmental regime on development, particularly in the developing countries; and how a radical environment-oriented development system should be underwritten. These are all pertinent aspects of an issue that should be addressed seriously. While we may differ in respect of certain areas, there is one point that we cannot argue against - that the environment is not only our common heritage but also a legacy that we shall bequeath to our children. That being the case, we have an insuperable obligation to engage in activities that will contribute both to our well-being and, indeed, to our survival. It is against this background that the Sierra Leone delegation regards the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, as being crucial to our interests.

The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization, observes that for the entire human race the stakes in the forthcoming conference are high. We agree with this view, and we expect the consensus emerging from those negotiations to encompass clearly designed long-term strategies that will enable developing countries like ours to obtain the technological and material capability to deal with the deleterious effects of poverty and to embark on environmentally sound and sustainable development

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practices. It is our hope that this conference will not lead to a further marginalization of the developing countries and, above all, that it will address seriously those aspects of this issue that are of particular concern to us.

Before ending my statement I should like to commend the Secretary-General and his staff for their untiring efforts to help us to achieve the aims and objectives of our Organization. Mr. Perez de Cuellar has rendered outstanding service to the United Nations for 20 years - during the last 10, as Secretary-General. During these years significant events have affected the Organization in a fundamental way. The retreat from multilateralism has subsided somewhat, and the Organization has reoccupied the centre stage in international relations. My delegation extends sincere best wishes to Mr. Perez de Cuellar as he leaves us. His selfless service will go down in the annals of our Organization.

In conclusion, I should like to recall these words of the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session:

> "With its return from the doldrums, and with its role no longer peripheral, the United Nations has come nearer to the vision of its Charter." (A/46/1, p. 22)

Sierra Leone shares these sentiments and commits itself to working closely with others to achieve the objectives of the Charter.

ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE TOFILAU ETI ALESANA, PRIME MINISTER OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF WESTERN SAMOA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Independent State of Western Samoa.

Tofilau Eti Alesana, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Western Samoa, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Independent State of Western Samoa, The Honourable Tofilau Eti Alesana, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. ALESANA (Samoa): May I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to your high post. Your long experience of international affairs and your diplomatic skills, which are well known to your colleagues, will serve this Assembly well. Our warm relations with your country and with yourself will make working with you a pleasure.

May I also pay tribute to your predecessor - Malta's Foreign Minister, Guido de Marco - for his proficient leadership of the General Assembly at its last session.

(Mr. Alesana, Samoa)

This last year has seen a great expansion of the role of the United Nations and an enhancement of its stature that are most gratifying to us. Among the most recent examples in this connection is the sensitive role the Secretary-General has been playing regarding the hostages held in the Middle East, and we pray that through his efforts they may soon all be released. His quiet diplomatic skills, patience and integrity have contributed in no small measure to the renewed vigour of the United Nations. We thank him for his wise and compassionate leadership over these past difficult, but momentous, 10 years and we wish him well in his future endeavours. He will leave a much more vital Organization and a strengthened role for his successor. Whoever that might be, he will be able to depend on Samoa's continued faith and active support of the Organization.

The number of Members of the United Nations is increasing, and during this session of the General Assembly we have been pleased to welcome seven new Members to the Organization.

First of all, it gives us a great deal of satisfaction and joy to welcome fellow nations of the Pacific and the Pacific Rim to the United Nations. Both the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands are, like Samoa, members of the South Pacific Forum, and it is a special pleasure to see them joining us in this international forum as well. We know from working with them in the region that they will add to the vitality of the United Nations and contribute to the attainment of its objectives.

We have long supported the admission of the Republic of Korea to United Nations membership, and it pleases us to see this finally achieved. We believe in the advantages of universality and, with the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea both belonging to the United

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Nations, we feel that an environment will be provided for reconciliation between them.

We also welcome the Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - States we know will make a worthy contribution to our work. They were, of course, members of the League of Nations, and their proud histories and indomitable spirits well qualify them for membership.

Last year we spoke of the immense speed at which world events were moving. This year there has indeed been an acceleration of the pace, and we are witnessing the beginning of an era of a courageous new world; a world that requires the utmost understanding, patience, compassion and flexibility of its leaders; a world where the voice of the people is becoming paramount and wise leaders listen. Democracy is resolutely on the march across the globe and, as evidenced by the recent events in the USSR and also in the Gulf, those that stand in its way only seem to hasten its pace. We see all about us the breakdown of repression and old tyrannies.

Democracy and freedom are spreading swiftly throughout Eastern Europe, where the Iron Curtain once barred the way, and there is now new hope for peoples once denied them. Sadly, violence continues in Yugoslavia. We welcome the Security Council resolution on this matter and endorse the arms embargo. We hope that the European plan succeeds in bringing peace to the country.

I am encouraged that in South Africa the repressive apartheid system shows signs of ending. Where for so many years the world's entreaties fell on deaf ears, finally there is movement forward. Though the South African Government's proposals for a new constitution leave much to be desired, it is evident that the South African Government can no longer deny the basic rights

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of the majority of its people nor the direction the country must take. It would seem that even in that most intransigent bastion of racism at long last movement is beginning on the road to democracy. It is our hope that now that a peace agreement has been signed by the parties, steady progress will continue and not be set back by violence or retrograde steps.

In the Middle East the pace has also quickened; a Middle East peace conference is expected to begin this month, an eventuality many thought to be far in the future if indeed it would occur at all. This is the outcome not only of the new international order but of determined and enlightened diplomacy, and we are hopeful for the success of this peace initiative led by the United States. While many key procedural issues remain open, this opportunity to begin the healing of old wounds must be given every chance to succeed, with all parties represented and policies that could impede its progress discontinued.

In Lebanon too there has been some progress; the civil war has finally ceased. Lebanon, however, must be allowed to rebuild without foreign forces on its soil or domination from others.

In Cambodia events move steadily forward towards a comprehensive political settlement, and the new developments in this process are very pleasing. The United Nations must maintain its strong presence in the achievement of peace for Cambodia and Indo-China.

We hope that the proposed conference on the Cyprus dispute will take place as planned. The Secretary-General will bring to that conference his vast experience and skills and we wish him success in his efforts to find a solution.

(Mr. Alesana, Samoa)

In Afghanistan and Western Sahara we trust that the work of the Secretary-General, the resolve of the United Nations and the positive undertakings by the United States and the Soviet Union and the parties concerned will restore the processes of peace in these countries.

In all these events, the trend is a drive for freedom through self-determination, more representative government, and individual rights. We confirm our belief in the rights of people freely to decide for themselves what they want. In our country we have practised representative participation in elections since independence, but in accordance with the requirements of our customs and traditions. Only this year did we implement universal suffrage after our people had made a conscious choice by referendum that universal suffrage should become part of our way of life.

We have watched and noted the important work of the United Nations in eliminating abuses of individual freedom around the world, in particular in Central America, where most recently the protagonists in the long-lived civil war have finally signed a peace agreement. Samoa's hope is that it will be able to participate more actively in the worthy work of the Commission on Human Rights, and we enthusiastically support the holding of the World Conference on Human Rights in Berlin in 1993.

While the United Nations has been successful in supporting freedom and individual rights, a matter that casts a shadow over the integrity of our approach is the long-standing resolution 3379 (XXX) adopted in 1975, which states that Zionism is racism. Learned speakers at this rostrum have expounded the anomalous nature of this resolution and we join in the call for its reconsideration.

(Mr. Alesana, Samoa)

It is sometimes suggested that with the end of the global bipolarism that drove the arms, the need for arms control and disarmament is now less urgent. To the contrary, my Government feels that we should not be complacent and should seize the opportunity created by new world conditions to hasten the progress of disarmament. The announcement by the United States that it plans to retire a large part of its nuclear arsenal and the very positive response of the Soviet Union are promising developments. We applaud these moves, which are substantial advances in the nuclear-disarmament process. We look forward to similar positive steps from the other nuclear-weapons Powers.

We welcome the decisions of China and France to become parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and are pleased that other countries have recently done so. It is important that this Treaty and the safeguards it establishes be strengthened and observed. The events in Iraq and the information uncovered by the Special Commission in its inspections abundantly highlighted this need.

Concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty remains an urgent priority. We think the circumstances are now conducive for the nuclear Powers to take steps to negotiate such a treaty, and we urge them to do so. A comprehensive test-ban treaty would reinforce global non-proliferation efforts. In our region, we have the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, which also makes an important contribution in addressing nuclear non-proliferation; and we renew our plea to the United States, France and the United Kingdom to become parties to its protocols.

The Gulf conflict has served to focus attention on the dangerous proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction as well. We can clearly see that there is an urgent need to achieve a comprehensive chemical-weapons

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convention at the earliest possible date. While no chemical weapons are produced in the South Pacific, we have been forced to grapple with the issue of the disposal of toxic agents from such weapons in our region.

We were pleased to see the support given at the recent Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference to strengthening the current regime and we wish to see it become universal.

Equally, the instability brought about by the huge and unmonitored accumulations of conventional weapons calls for urgent measures. The merchants of death, the arms dealers, are operating on ever-larger and more efficient scales. The resulting weapons build-ups contribute to regional and ultimately global insecurity. We therefore support the proposal for a United Nations-based register on arms transfers. Transparency in the conventional-arms trade could be the launching pad for more ambitious measures at a later date.

While disarmament should lead to a more peaceful way of life on earth, this peace will be of little use to us if the quality of life generally continues to be destroyed by our lack of respect for the environment. We have heard colleagues from low-lying island countries speak of the threat of the rise in sea level to their very existence. That is the reality of the situation at its grimmest. Even we in the relative safety of our higher islands could still lose most of our coastal land.

We must indeed learn and practice respect for the living systems of which mankind is but a part. For this reason we attach great importance to the convening of the first-ever "Earth Summit", as it is being called. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development taking place in Brazil next year is an opportunity for serious stock-taking of the world's resources. It is a chance to assess the damage already done and to plan immediate preventive

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measures. We must strive to maintain an ecologically sound environment whilst ensuring that sustainable development is accelerated for the benefit of both humankind and the planet. "Eco-development" is no trendy catchword; it is essential if we and the Earth are to survive and prosper.

We wish to place on record our appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme for the coordination of the Conference preparations and in particular for their assistance with national statements for countries of our region.

Environmental matters are certainly of great concern to the Pacific. We are pleased to report that the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) has been strengthened into a fully autonomous regional organization, with its headquarters in our capital, Apia. Several important environmental conventions are in force in the region. These are the Convention for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region; the SPREP Convention and its associated Protocol for Combating Pollution Emergencies and the Prevention of Pollution by Dumping; and the Convention on the Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific, the Apia Convention.

In addition, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty expresses our strong opposition to nuclear weapons and their testing in the region. The reasons for such tests have become even more obscure to us, with reduced global tensions and the dramatic progress that has been made in disarmament. The immediate and pressing concern is the danger that these tests pose to the fragile environment in which they take place.

The Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Driftnets in the South Pacific has also recently entered into force. Marine resources provide an essential part of the life-support system of the island countries of the

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Pacific, and Samoa is pleased that the importance of their conservation is now being realized. We welcome the ongoing implementation of the General Assembly resolution on driftnet fishing and look forward to the global cessation of such practices in accordance with the time-frame set by the United Nations. We welcome the undertakings that have already been made in this regard and we hope that not only driftnet fishing but all other techniques that are proven threats to the conservation of the resources in question be dealt with firmly.

A matter that continues to require our attention in the region is New Caledonia. The United Nations has adopted a Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial peoples and is committed to the eradication of colonialism by the year 2000. In this regard, we are encouraged by the measures to promote political, economic and social development taken by France under the Matignon Accords to prepare the way for the act of self-determination in 1998.

We also welcome the willingness of the Government of France to accept the Forum Ministerial Committee, which recently visited New Caledonia. Its report was both informative and constructive, and we believe that further visits should be facilitated.

The ending of the cold war has political change and reform around the world moving at a crisp pace. It also means that the United Nations has an increasingly important role in ensuring security and preventing crises from escalating into tragedies, as happened in the Gulf War. Guardianship of the peace is paramount and the Secretary-General's call for preventive diplomacy by the United Nations must be supported.

(Mr. Alesana, Samoa)

Diminishing world tensions, new-found freedom and the enlightened spirit of cooperation provide new hopes of opportunities for all to fulfil their reasonable aspirations. But hope can be easily dashed and turn to bitterness if an adequate degree of economic well-being is not achieved and poverty sets in. Clearly, priority must be given to providing conditions to meet economic objectives. A cornerstone factor is trade - liberalized trade. The Assembly has repeatedly heard the call made for the successful and urgent completion of the Uruguay Round, and we add our voice to that call.

Economic security is the key to our success in preventing future conflicts. Without it, the stability we have worked so hard to achieve in our individual countries and in the world would be in grave danger of disintegrating. In our region, attaining and maintaining levels of economic development to meet the growing needs of our people is not an easy task for small nations of the Pacific, including Samoa. What we have achieved, as late entrants into the modern world of economics and international commerce, has been to a considerable extent due to the willing cooperation of the family of nations. The relative stability enjoyed by our country and our region has been the result of our combined effort, and we thank each and every nation for their contributions to our development. We hope that we can continue to count on their support in the partnership we have forged.

It is appropriate that we are addressing the Assembly in the week which includes the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, because disasters, either man-made or natural, are phenomena which, because of the small size of our island nations, have a cruel effect on us. Our region, like some others, is particularly prone to cyclones and earthquakes. Besides the threat they pose to life and damage to the environment, at their worst they are capable of plunging agrarian-based economies like ours into severe

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decline. We therefore fully support any undertaking by the United Nations to improve its disaster arrangements. We would suggest, however, that it is essential that these arrangements go beyond immediate relief and, as well, address disaster-mitigation measures and rehabilitation requirements adequately.

I and all of our colleagues have spoken of our successes, but we have also identified the numerous problems and challenges that are the reason for the existence of this institution, the United Nations. Together we can agree on standards of conduct, within our individual countries and amongst our family of nations, to resolve disputes and maintain peace. We have asked the United Nations to assume a greater role in many areas, including peace-keeping and monitoring, mediation and verification, and enhancement of economic security and stability. We must give it the support required to carry out these roles.

We are at one of the pivotal moments in history when the direction of the world can be changed for the better. Too often in the past, when we stood at the crossroads, we have been too preoccupied with our disagreements and narrow perspectives to grasp the opportunity. We have the chance now to leave the legacy of a secure world to our children; it must not be lost.

Samoa looks forward with great pride and expectation to the achievements which will be initiated by this forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the independent State of Western Samoa for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Tofilau Eti Alesana, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Western Samoa, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. NDONG (Equatorial Guinea) (interpretation from Spanish): The forty-sixth session of the General Assembly is taking place in a spirit of true peace, tranquillity and security under the auspices of the international community, and the delegation of Equatorial Guinea intends to make its contribution to all initiatives and suggestions that may emerge for the benefit of free and sovereign peoples.

I had the privilege of being the first speaker to congratulate Mr. Samir Shihabi on behalf of the African States. This time I should like, on behalf of the delegation of Equatorial Guinea, to congratulate him on his election to the presidency of the Assembly at this session. His great experience and diplomatic abilities are a sufficient guarantee of the success of our debates. His country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is well known not so much as a great country rich in oil resources but, rather, as a contributor to and faithful collaborator with the international community in respect of the implementation of the principles and ideals of the Charter of the United Nations, and as a country that cooperates in the development of the poorest and least advanced countries, including my own, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. Through him, I extend our congratulations to all the members of the Bureau, in the conviction that with their well-known ability they will contribute to solving our problems in the best possible way.

We express our warmest congratulations to his predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Justice of Malta, and to the members of his Bureau for their outstanding work during the last session.

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

The previous speakers have expressed their highest regard for our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, a man of patience, determination and a deep sense of responsibility. His self-sacrifice and total dedication to the problems of the international community and the least-advantaged countries merit a high tribute from us, in recognition of the arduous, positive work which, with his great ability, has brought the United Nations to the position that it deserves in the service of mankind.

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

The delegation of Equatorial Guinea shares the sincere general feeling that Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar will remain in the hearts and minds of each of us as an example of someone who has carried out his duty.

The admission of seven new Member States to the United Nations is a unique event in the history of our Organization. My country welcomes this development and congratulates all Members on their unanimous decision, which once again confirms the universality of our Organization. We are happy to welcome the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, countries with which Equatorial Guinea maintains good, close diplomatic relations. We are proud to have sponsored the respective resolutions on their admission. The simultaneous admission of the two Koreas is a good omen for a sincere, open dialogue that will lead to the peaceful unification of their peoples, as has been done so commendably by Germany.

We also welcome and congratulate the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, first on their return to the great family of independent, sovereign nations, and, secondly, on becoming Members of the United Nations.

We wish to express equally heartfelt congratulations to the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands and to extend a warm welcome to them.

We are going through one of the best periods in the history of our Organization, a time when, with the long cold war and ideological bipolarity behind us, we are beginning to enjoy relations in a climate of confidence and optimism. The rapid disappearance of totalitarian Governments and the beginning of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction are the clearest signs of this. They call on us to focus our attention on the point where we should have begun - recognition and re-evaluation of the human person as a

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free agent and the protagonist of history, concepts which were being devalued, forgotten and weakened by the emergence of incredibly sophisticated machinery of destruction. The international community's new awareness of the qualities of freedom, solidarity, security and development of the human person is above all an encouraging sign of the reconstruction of the world order and an urgent appeal to make a reality of the long-cherished dream of the human community.

I take this opportunity to express the strong indignation of my country and Government over the military action in Haiti which led to the overthrow of the first constitutionally and democratically elected President, in clear violation of the democratic order and in defiance of the United Nations and the entire international community. We appeal to the military to desist from its action and restore the constitutionally elected Government to power.

In my statement in the general debate at the forty-fifth session I said, with special reference to my Government's political programme to institute a multiparty system as an authentic expression of democracy:

> "The fact that Equatorial Guinea still has only one political party is not a contradiction and should not be viewed as unwillingness to allow the popular will to express itself. Rather, it represents a preliminary educational and formative phase for the population to ensure that we do not repeat sorry past experience and that we mature in the process and interplay of democracy." (A/45/PV.21, p. 86)

We are now seeing a unique situation in the political history of Equatorial Guinea. The Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea, created in 1987 as an experimental test of democratic freedoms, with voluntary membership, adopted at an extraordinary session on 31 May this year a resolution

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recommending that that Government draw up a programme to open the door to a multiparty system. That resolution, confirmed by the first Extraordinary Congress of the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea, held in Bata from 2 to 6 August, has been accepted by the Government of Equatorial Guinea, which, to carry out that mandate, has prepared and adopted a short-term, medium-term and long-term plan. The President of the Republic, its Head of State and Government, submitted the three-part plan to the people on 20 September.

First, the short-term plan proposes the elaboration and promulgation of a set of laws and provisions to provide the legal framework to guarantee other political choices in the country, in an atmosphere of peace, tranquillity and political order, which has reigned in our country since 3 August 1979; revision of the Fundamental Law, as a necessary condition for the promulgation of the other provisions; and the formation and functioning of political parties.

Secondly, the medium-term plan proposes the creation by the Government of a climate for positive participation by the political parties that have been created in forming the country's elective organs on the expiry of the term of office of the present Legislature.

Thirdly, the long-term plan proposes the creation by the Government of a climate permitting positive participation by political parties at all levels, as provided for by law, for the consolidation of the pluralist system in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

The delegation of Equatorial Guinea is proud to inform the Assembly that the Commission appointed to deal with technical aspects of that programme has completed its work and reported to the Government, which in turn is now

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submitting it to the legislative body, the Chamber of Representatives of the People, for its study and approval.

The process of democratization in Equatorial Guinea is not a haphazard matter, nor is it a result of foreign influence or pressure. Rather, it is born of a deeply felt need arising from the coherent programme of President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who, after taking power on 3 August 1979, decided to educate and train the population for a democratic system. Once national unity and reconciliation had been achieved he began the process of democratization with the entry into force of the Fundamental Law of 1982 and the accompanying change from military government to civil and constitutional government. It is in that context that we must see the Government's efforts to restore peace, order and tranquillity in the country, while safeguarding fundamental freedoms and human rights.

Not content with recognizing, listing and defining those matters in article 20 and subsequent articles of the fundamental law, the Government also created instruments and control mechanisms for their full implementation. There was thus created the National Commission of Human Rights under Decree-Law No. 7 of 27 September 1990. That Commission has full independence and is absolutely free and impartial; it enjoys immunities and privileges in carrying out its functions.

It is from the same perspective that we must also see the coming into force of Law No. 4/1991 of 4 June, regulating the exercise of religious freedom in conformity with article 20, paragraph 5, of the Fundamental Law, which says:

"Every person shall enjoy the right of freedom of conscience and religion, individually or collectively, in public or in private".

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

The last pardon granted, on 3 August 1991, which emptied our national jails and closed their doors, confirms the political will to put into practice principles and ideals concerning the well-being of persons.

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

On various occasions we have stressed that democracy, understood as a political system permitting popular participation in public affairs, has no single or absolute model, but is rather a form of government based on and adapting itself to the realities and values of each country.

Hence, we note with sadness and a sense of powerlessness the emphasis with which the problem of human rights is dealt with here, disregarding what, in our view, should be given the highest priority. I refer to the extreme poverty, want, hunger and disease to which virtually more than half the people of the world are victim. If those problems were to be resolved, the human person would be the focus of development. We therefore resolutely support the Secretary-General's idea to convene a world summit on social development.

Preserving international peace and security and economic cooperation continue to be the common goals the organs of the United Nations should pursue with a view to achieving the best results. We should therefore strike a balance between the organs of the United Nations and greater participation by its Members. This is the way to achieve the democratization of the United Nations, and thus respect for the will of the majority.

The delegation of Equatorial Guinea believes that just as the United Nations tackles social problems, it should also address environment problems, which are vital to our existence. Hence we are encouraged at the holding, in Brazil, of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

We believe that the time has come for the humanization achieved in the political sphere to be extended to the economic sphere. The linking of politics to the economy leads us to doubt that there will ever be genuine and lasting peace in the world. For the poor and least developed countries,

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

cancellation of the external debt appears to be the first - and inevitable - solution.

Since 3 August 1979, the date of the liberation of Equatorial Guinea from a gloomy and painful past, the reconstruction and economic recovery of the country have been among the major struggles waged by the Government. Many initiatives have been taken and many projects carried out. The holding of two Round Tables in Geneva in 1982 and 1988 form part of the process; their recommendations, and the consequent structural adjustments, have been implemented. But for a country seeking to break out of what is barely a subsistence economy, this is truly difficult. I take the opportunity to thank all friendly countries and donors, as well as the international financial institutions, for their valuable support. However, my country is seriously concerned over the continued and persistent functioning of the protectionist system, which has not only made the Uruguay Round unfruitful, but also had negative effects on a country such as ours, which is correctly categorized as among the least developed. We view with optimism the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on stable solutions to our commodity problems. In this regard, the delegation of Equatorial Guinea welcomes the Japanese initiative to hold in 1993 a summit meeting on Africa's development.

Similarly, we look forward to the success of the second Programme of Action on Africa's Recovery and Economic Development. We pledge our full cooperation to the creation of the African Economic Community, in keeping with the Abuja guidelines - something which is both necessary and of vital importance for our region.

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

Without indulging in self-praise, I must say that the efforts of the Government of Equatorial Guinea for the well-being of the country, and hence of the human person, can be seen by anyone who wishes to visit the country. It is with deep pride and satisfaction that we learned of the international recognition, in the form of the Humberto Biancamano Prize, extended to His Excellency Obiang Nguema Mbasogo in Bata on 17 April 1991 by an international panel composed of representatives of the European Economic Community, the European Parliament, the Nobel Prize, university rectors, representatives of the international press and the Director of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in connection with the efforts for political stability, democratization and economic development of the country.

On behalf of the President of the Republic, the Government and the people, I wish to reiterate from this rostrum our thanks to these organizations and personalities.

The delegation of Equatorial Guinea recognizes and commends the positive changes made by the South African Government aimed at eradicating the system of apartheid, but we regret to note that it has not yet been completely eradicated. We cherish the hope that there will be good results from the negotiations on a non-racist and democratic constitution fully guaranteeing the fundamental rights of all South Africans, in keeping with the principle of one-man, one-vote.

We are concerned over the disturbances in the sister countries of Liberia, Ethiopia, Somalia and Rwanda, and we urge their leaders to reconsider their positions and, through open and sincere dialogue, find solutions that restore peace, order and tranquillity.

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

We are convinced that peace in the Middle East cannot coexist with the persistent occupation of the Palestinian, Arab and Lebanese territories by Israel. The reality of the facts requires us to recognize both Israel and Palestine as free and sovereign States, each within its own recognized boundaries.

We harbour the hope that the holding of a peace conference, under the positive auspices of the Presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union, will calm passions and bring about a peaceful and lasting solution.

We congratulate Lebanon on its having achieved national reconciliation. The international community should lend support and assistance to that country for its reconstruction.

We resolutely support and praise the efforts of the Secretary-General with regard to the situation in Cyprus.

We most sincerely hope that the tragic and painful situation in Yugoslavia, a pioneer of the Non-Aligned Movement, will retain the attention of the international community so that a solution acceptable to the parties can be found.

There is general agreement that military options are not the only or most desirable way to seek peace. Si vis pacem, para bellum - if you desire peace, prepare for war - has lost its validity.

My delegation welcomes the climate of peace and tranquillity promised by the political and economic negotiations, agreements, conventions and treaties aimed at establishing a common understanding between the sister countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, with which we are linked through language, culture and history. It is along this line of thinking that, without engaging

(Mr. Ndong, Equatorial Guinea)

in historical judgements or inquiring as to who is right or wrong, we urge the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba to open the doors to negotiations in order to arrive at solutions acceptable to the peoples on boch sides, innocent victims of their rigid positions. That is an urgent requirement of the new era in which we find ourselves. The international community and history will praise and thank them for it. The United Nations is the appropriate forum and the time is right.

Disarmament has always been the focus of our attention. Although we do not produce weapons nor possess them, as part of the international community, and since we might become their innocent victims, we wish to see their complete elimination. Therefore, we welcome and praise the unilateral initiative of the President of the United States, reciprocated by the President of the Soviet Union, to begin the process of their destruction and elimination. Of course, we must express our bitterness over the vast amounts of money spent on weapons; such resources could better serve to alleviate some of the many ills affecting mankind, but we take consolation in the saying "Better late than never".

Mr. JAAKSON (Estonia): I extend my warm congratulations to Mr. Shihabi on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. We also extend our sincere appreciation to Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta and all earlier Presidents of the General Assembly whose efforts have guided and enriched the work of this body on behalf of the peoples of the world. At the same time we express our gratitude and respect to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his tireless efforts to promote peace and security in the world. The people of Estonia have laboured and persevered for generations in order to join this body as a fully sovereign nation at peace with its neighbours. We look forward to working under his guidance in the United Nations.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as full members of this body. With equal feeling we welcome the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

With particular pleasure we welcome the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania and remind ourselves that the peoples of the Baltic States have never gone to war against each other. Instead, we have shared a common history - colonial domination by stronger neighbours who have fought their wars on our soil and at our expense. When we entered the League of Nations after the First World War our peoples hoped that a new era had begun. As we join the United Nations and put the Second World War behind us we renew our faith in the principles on which this body is based and trust that a new era has indeed begun.

The Estonian people have finally realized their age-old dream of self-determination. Estonia's independence as a State has been restored and

(Mr. Jaakson, Estonia)

recognized by the world community. Estonia values highly its acceptance as a Member of the United Nations and stands ready to fulfil its international obligations.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to those who supported us in this struggle through so many years. We give particular thanks to Iceland - a country the small size of which did not stand in the way of moral courage. The people of Iceland will always have a special place in our history.

Unfortunately, acceptance into the United Nations does not solve the many problems we face in consolidating our independence. Central to these are questions that relate to the traditional political and economic orientation of our country. Historically and culturally Estonia has always had strong ties to Western and Central Europe. That was true even under the domination of the Russian Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Between 1940 and 1991 the Soviet occupation disrupted those ties but did not manage to destroy them.

In terms of the political and economic development of Estonia, an immediate priority must be the restoration of those ties and the restoration of a European way of life. To achieve these aims, we wish to integrate as quickly as possible with the political and economic structures of modern Europe. Estonia is already a full member of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), has strong ties with the nations of the Nordic Council, and has initiated discussions on cooperation with the European Free Trade Association. Finally, many members of the European Community have expressed their interest in our becoming an associate member of the European Community.

(Mr. Jaakson, Estonia)

Estonia's orientation towards Europe does not, however, mean that it will fail to understand the needs and aspirations of the developing countries. We feel that we are in fact better positioned to appreciate these issues than the Western countries whose values we share. The Baltic States have emerged from a long and difficult period of colonial rule. We hope that this experience augurs well for close ties and cooperation with the third world.

Estonians know full well what it means to live under foreign domination, especially when that domination is based on totalitarianism. For that reason, Estonia cannot take any position that fails to support the right of all peoples to self-determination.

Considering this, the Government of the Republic of Estonia recognized the independence of Slovenia on 26 September. Independence is the free choice of the Slovenian people and Slovenia fulfils the criteria for independent statehood under the generally accepted principles of international law. Estonia is convinced that respect for the right of the Slovenian and Croatian peoples to self-determination is the most effective way to achieve a solution to the Yugoslav conflict in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

At the same time, Estonia can only accept peaceful means based on democratic principles and respect for human rights - as well as respect for the rights of minorities. These are, after all, the principles on which the people of Estonia have based the restoration of their independent statehood.

In the short term, Estonia's highest foreign policy priority is the normalization of relations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. I am happy to report that yesterday the Soviet Union and Estonia established formal diplomatic relations. It is in the interests of Estonia to pursue a policy

(Mr. Jaakson, Estonia)

based on friendly relations and mutual respect for national sovereignty. Estonia also considers it essential to preserve mutually beneficial economic ties with the republics of the USSR. The precondition for this, of course, is continued progress towards democracy in the republics of the USSR, in an atmosphere of internal stability. Estonia hopes that those republics can solve their economic difficulties and forestall the violent disintegration of the USSR. Such an event could lead to a civil war capable of threatening the stability of the entire world.

(Mr. Jaakson, Estonia)

We are also concerned by the attitude of the USSR in connection with the process of fully realizing Estonian statehood. While the State Council of the USSR recognized the independence of the Baltic States on 6 September 1991, we find that there are political forces and Government agencies of the USSR that fail to acknowledge or to accept the restoration of Estonia's independence. Those structures show no evidence of coming to terms with the new political realities. Most notable is a desire to maintain future relations with Estonia as if Estonia were a constituent republic of the USSR. This attitude is prejudicial to Estonian sovereignty and we hope that it will be as unacceptable to the world community as it is to the people of Estonia.

A separate and immediate issue is the timely withdrawal of Soviet occupation forces from Estonia. The Estonian Government is concerned about the efforts of some Soviet political leaders to delay the withdrawal of the Soviet military from Estonian territory. For example, Anatoly Sobchak, leader of the Soviet delegation in negotiations with Estonia, has repeatedly stated that troop withdrawals cannot begin before 1994. Estonia understands that some time must be allowed for Soviet occupation forces to return home. We do, however, believe that this goal can be accomplished with greater speed.

Of special concern is the continued presence of nuclear weapons and assault troops on our territory. We are also disturbed by the continued existence of large foreign military contingents in Tallinn, the Estonian capital, a presence that threatens the sovereignty of the Republic of Estonia. For that reason, on 5 October 1991 the Baltic Council decided to propose to the USSR that Soviet occupation troops evacuate all Baltic capitals by 1 December this year.

(Mr. Jaakson, Estonia)

Regarding the general issue of European security, we applaud the fact that the process of democratization in the republics of the USSR, taken together with the restoration of the independence of the Baltic States, has markedly reduced tensions in Europe. No longer do we have a trip-wire of confrontation separating East and West. This new reality has become the basis for Estonian national-security doctrine. We do not consider ourselves neutral since we no longer see a Europe divided into hostile alliances. Estonia wishes to cooperate with its neighbours on questions of defence and strategic doctrine, as well as with all other members of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in the context of the CSCE process.

In the spring of 1990, Estonia held parliamentary elections that were as democratic as possible under the conditions then prevailing. Now that independence has been restored and a flourishing multi-party system has been established it is both necessary and desirable to hold new elections. The Supreme Council of the Republic of Estonia has decided to call new elections in 1992 in order to seat a new and more representative parliament under conditions that conform to all generally accepted principles of democratic government.

Of course, the internal political situation in Estonia is not without its problems. Fifty-one years of foreign occupation have weakened the political traditions nurtured during the period of independence. However, this difficult experience has taught us that only a democratic political system and a market economy can address the interests of the Estonian people. A Constitutional Assembly has been convened to develop a new constitution based on that understanding. That constitution will be in accord with the

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provisions and principles of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as established by the Council of Europe on 4 November 1950.

In the economic sphere, statutes are being prepared that will facilitate the conversion to a market economy based on the rule of law. During the past year, laws have been written to establish private property rights, protect the interests of foreign and domestic investors and institute a fair taxation system that is favourable to private investment. The principles behind these laws are in accord with those implicit in the membership requirements of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Between the two world wars, Estonia was unique among the nations of the world community in terms of its steadfast and tolerant approach to minority rights. Estonian statutes on cultural autonomy for minority nationalities were a remarkable exception in a Europe torn apart by hatred and fear. These statutes guaranteed to each national group and religious minority the opportunity for education in their native language, their own publications, the freedom to practise their own religious customs, and freedom of cultural expression as they saw fit. The revival of these liberal principles will be a good basis for cooperation between the many different nationalities living in Estonia today.

During the years of occupation a great many non-Estonians were settled in Estonia. Many of these people think of themselves as having found a new homeland and have supported the aspirations of the Estonian people to self-determination. We find it self-evident that the citizens of other countries residing in Estonia should have the opportunity to apply for

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citizenship on the basis of a fair and equitable citizenship law. If they wish to work in Estonia while remaining citizens of other countries, that opportunity will not be arbitrarily denied them.

The Republic of Estonia and its people are in the process of rejoining the world community after 51 years of foreign occupation. We shall not waste this opportunity for which so many have suffered. We wish to rejoin Europe as a democratic State, as a good neighbour, as a State that respects human rights, and as a trustworthy partner in the affairs of nations.

Mr. TAVERAS GUZMAN (Dominican Republic) (interpretation from Spanish): It is a very great honour for me to address the Assembly at its forty-sixth session and to convey, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Dominican Republic, our sincere wishes for peace and the well-being of all the nations of the Earth.

Allow me to express to Mr. Shihabi the congratulations of the Dominican delegation on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I have every confidence that his diplomatic skill and experience will ensure that our deliberations will be fruitful, will help to strengthen international order and make for an even more beneficial peace among all the nations of the world.

I should also like to express our gratitude to the outgoing President, Mr. Guido de Marco, for his competence and dignity, and for the manner in which he presided over the proceedings of the forty-fifth session.

Moreover, I wish to express our greetings to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar for his inestimable efforts as Secretary-General of the Organization. The dedication and the zeal with which he has discharged his lofty functions for nearly a decade, and the courage and devotion he has shown in remaining in the service of the ideals of the United Nations, have earned him high praise, which confirms the great esteem in which he is held by the nations of the world.

My delegation is pleased to extend a very warm welcome on their membership of the Organization to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Rather than use the time at my disposal to discuss other serious issues

(Mr. Taveras Guzman, Dominican Republic)

on the agenda of the Assembly, I feel it would be more useful to enlighten the Members of the Organization about another small problem that affects just two neighbouring countries, which are perhaps unique in the world, in that together they occupy a small island in the Caribbean Sea and have relatively similar problems.

In our statements to the General Assembly, the question of Haiti has, year after year, been a permanent fixture. How could it be otherwise, since geography and history have ordained that Haiti and the Dominican Republic should be two sovereign nations that are in the unique position of sharing the same island? As a result of this propinquity, we have been witness to the political, social, economic and environmental misfortunes that have, like ruinous plagues, befallen the Haitian people. We have seen and felt the burden of the long-lasting tyrannical political regimes that have robbed that people of their freedoms. We have grieved at the social inequalities that have deprived the great majority of the people of education, health and development. As neighbours, we have seen the Haitian people come and go, weighed down, distressed and broken by abject poverty, and we have watched with amazement and sadness as its arable land has been stripped of its plant cover and has virtually been turned into a wasteland.

A prolific people, the people of Haiti have not been able to find in their own territory the productive land they need, and we have all observed how they have spilled over into the neighbouring area, in endless waves of desperation.

Haiti has been accusing us in various international forums of violating the rights of Haitians and of tolerating slavery-like conditions in the

(Mr. Taveras Guzman, Dominican Republic)

employment of Haitians on sugar-cane plantations in the Dominican Republic. And yet, as many times as we have spoken before the Assembly on the question of Haiti, we have done so in order to plead for assistance on behalf of the Haitian people in a righteous gesture of solidarity.

This time, after hearing the President of Haiti vehemently repeat this accusation here, we resolved that we should set the record straight and state loud and clear before this world gathering that Haiti's aim is to subject the Dominican Republic to public blackmail and morally bind it hand and feet in a futile attempt to prevent the authorities from performing their duty as the guardians of the most precious attributes of nationhood.

We reject most emphatically the charges levelled by the President of Haiti in his address to the Assembly on 25 September, to the effect that the rights of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic are being violated. This assertion is an unacceptable distortion of the facts. Our historical problem in coexisting with Haiti is the problem that has been brought about by the clandestine immigration of the poverty-stricken agricultural and urban masses from Haiti to the Dominican Republic.

(Mr. Taveras Guzman, Dominican Republic)

It is highly unusual for a Head of State to appear before the international community to criticize another nation for enforcing its laws on public order. What is at issue is the clear-cut exercise by the Dominican authorities of their sovereign rights when, in pursuance of immigration regulations, they order the repatriation of aliens who have illegally entered and are residing illegally in the territory of the Dominican Republic.

Thousands of Dominican men and women have been deported to their own country by the authorities of the United States, Spain and the Netherlands this year because they were living illegally in the territories of those States. However much we may have been pained by these actions, it has not occurred to us to take to any forum to denounce the deportation of Dominicans as a violation of their rights or as offences against mankind.

How can it be fair or legal for Spain, the Netherlands and the United States to deport Dominicans living illegally in their territories while it is viewed as unfair or as an abuse for the authorities of the Dominican Republic to repatriate Haitians who have clandestinely entered its territory and are living illegally there?

We therefore reject Haiti's attempt to pillory the Dominican Republic before the international community by accusing it of violating the rights of Haitians. The truth is that the great masses of Haitians, strangled by the lack of adequate living space in their own country, have been leaving their territory in droves in search of a place where they can settle down, live and get ahead. No one, absolutely no one, can ask the Dominican Republic, a tiny nation with an area of just 48,000 square kilometres and a population of 7,350,000, to assume the burden of all the Haitians who have been driven out of their country by desperation and hunger.

(Mr. Taveras Guzman, Dominican Republic)

With the upheaval caused by war in Central America, a little more than 1 million Guatemalans, Salvadorians, Nicaraguans and Hondurans have left their countries to seek refuge - political and economic refuge - in the United States and neighbouring countries. An international conference was held to deal with the issue of Central American refugees, and many programmes and activities - some of them under the auspices of United Nations agencies - were set up for the benefit of these refugees. Many of them have proved to be effective.

Hundreds of thousands of Haitian citizens have come to stay in our country. Is the Assembly aware of the enormous burden which this invasion of our economy has imposed on us, on the economy of a poor country, an economy that cannot provide bread, employment, health, education, clean drinking water or adequate housing for its own growing population? Has the Assembly any idea of the magnitude and enormity of this problem, which is of overwhelming proportions given our extremely limited resources?

I must tell the Assembly that it is impossible for the Dominican Republic to shoulder the tremendous burden of this immigration, which has been as abundant and torrential as the rains that accompany tropical storms. That is why we make an urgent appeal - an appeal for good will and for the international community to come to Haiti's aid with the dispatch the situation requires. It is the supreme gesture of justice for all of us to shoulder our fair share of the burden, to make an effort to ensure that the Haitian nation is able to accommodate in conditions of freedom and well-being all its children, so many of whom are today desperate refugees from hunger and poverty.

(Mr. Taveras Guzman,
Dominican Republic)

Aware of this situation, the Government of the Dominican Republic wishes to place on record before this world body that it has done everything within its power to seek a peaceful settlement of the problems to which I have referred and to reach agreements between the two parties that, to the fullest extent possible, respect the rights and satisfy the requirements of both countries. It is not inappropriate to mention here that an official mission headed by Myrtiho Seletin, the Minister for Social Affairs and Labour, recently visited the Dominican Republic on 15 August and had contacts with the Dominican authorities at the highest level.

During these initial contacts between the authorities of the two countries, it was agreed that another commission, similar to the existing one, would be appointed by the Government of the Dominican Republic and would visit Haiti to pursue the negotiations in a cordial and friendly atmosphere. Scarcely two weeks ago the first contact was made. The Dominican commision has not yet gone to Haiti, because the Dominican Secretary of State for Labour, who was to head the mission, had to travel to Germany on an official visit and returned just a few days ago to the Dominican capital.

When Haiti's new ambassador, Mr. Guy Alexandre, presented his credentials to the Dominican Government, the President of the Dominican Republic outlined for that distinguished diplomat a broad programme of action which the two countries might pursue with a view to settling their existing problems.*

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* The President returned to the Chair.

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That programme provides, inter alia, for the following: first, the conclusion of an agreement establishing the conditions under which Haitian labourers can be recruited for work in the Dominican sugar industry; secondly, application of this first agreement as a model, with suitable changes, to other areas which, like the coffee industry, hire large numbers of Haitian workers each year for the harvest; thirdly, screening by the Dominican immigration services of the many Haitians, both men and women, who have been living for years in the Dominican Republic and who, in consequence, are entitled to residence permits as temporary workers; and, fourthly, the holding of periodic meetings among prominent intellectuals from both Haiti and the Dominican Republic with a view to creating a climate of understanding between the two countries, since everyone is aware of the damage that has been caused between them by social, economic and historical factors, damage that tends to be aggravated by the abundance of Haitian manpower in the country, which gives rise to unfair competition that depresses the wages of Dominicans and creates a dangerous situation in which the needs of a large part of the Dominican working class go unmet.

Therefore I should like to conclude by assuring all the members of this world Assembly, especially our brothers in Latin America and in the Americas generally, that today the Dominican Republic is ruled by a democratic Government which respects human rights, which does not discriminate against any foreigners, which does not foster the creation or maintenance of situations of any kind that may affect peace in any part of the world, and which does not favour the establishment of barriers between the various members of the human family.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. Owing to a technical problem, speakers will not be able to use their table microphones and thus will have to come to the rostrum to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. NGARUKIYINTWALI (Rwanda) (interpretation from French): The head of the delegation of Uganda, Mr. Ssemogerere, Second Vice-Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of his country, in his statement at this forty-sixth session of the General Assembly devoted a section to Rwanda. I should like to thank him for the attention he has given to the problems of my country, Rwanda. In that statement the head of the delegation of Uganda has attempted to lead us to believe that Rwanda is looking for a scapegoat for the attacks by armed elements from Uganda against it. I reject that assertion, which deliberately overlooks historical facts and is thus a distortion of the facts.

I should like briefly to recall the following facts. On 3 October 1990, three days after the aggression committed against Rwanda by armed elements coming from Uganda, the Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations issued a press release, No. 1/90, which was circulated at the United Nations, in which it was stated that the assailants were deserters from the Ugandan Army, the National Resistance Army (NRA). In the same press release it was stated that if the attackers were to go back to Uganda they would be disarmed, arrested and brought to justice in accordance with the military code of Uganda. In support of that position set forth in the press release, the Head of State of Uganda, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, reaffirmed the same position at a press conference held in Brussels on 7 October 1990, emphasizing

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that if the deserters were to return to Uganda they would in fact be brought to justice. A recording setting forth this position is in existence. Therefore it is a verifiable fact.

On 10 October 1990, before the press in Kampala, Mr. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, declared the following:

"I doubt very much that the troops that are there in Rwanda can overcome the rebel forces. Most of these are the best elements of the National Resistance Army."

The facts I have just recalled undoubtedly constitute elements that anyone can analyse to verify whether or not Rwanda is looking for a scapegoat. Contrary to what was said by the head of the delegation of Uganda in his statement, to the effect that Rwanda is carrying out a propaganda campaign against his country, Rwanda is only re-establishing the facts. Rwanda has no interest in finding a scapegoat or waging a campaign against anyone, let alone against a neighbouring country with which we aspire to live in harmony, with complete transparency and honesty.

I shall not expand further on the basic facts regarding my country's attitude towards refugees. Its position has been frequently expressed, particularly since the declaration issued by the summit meeting at Dar-es-Salaam on 19 February 1991, at which Rwanda reaffirmed the inalienable right of all refugees from Rwanda to return to their homeland, at the same time recognizing that this was a measure of extreme importance for the achievement of national reconciliation. It is true that, as the summit meeting of Dar-es-Salaam recognized, Rwanda appealed for the international community's support in dealing with the situation with regard to resettlement of those refugees who opted for return to their country.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

International cooperation - especially cooperation between Rwanda and neighbouring countries - is essential, particularly in the case of those refugees who have opted for solutions other than voluntary repatriation. On behalf of the Government of Rwanda I should like once again to pay a very sincere tribute and express our profound gratitude to all those countries that have welcomed and given asylum to Rwandan refugees.

It is recognized that the problem of refugees is not the concern of a single country or a single region in the world; it is a world problem. What would happen, therefore, if every country that accepted refugees were to help them to arm themselves and brutally attack their country of origin? The world would risk becoming a powder-keg. So far as Africa is concerned, we in Rwanda are aware of this danger, and we hope that the conventions applicable to this situation will be fully applied.

I refer in particular to the convention on refugees prepared by the Organization of African Unity. Article 3 of paragraph 2 of this convention is of extreme importance and great pertinence with regard to security and good relations between neighbouring countries affected by the problems of refugees. It imposes on the signatory States the duty to forbid the refugees established in their territories to attack any member of the Organization of African Unity by way of activities that are likely to bring about tension between member States, particularly the use of arms, written publications or radio broadcasts.

I cannot remain silent with regard to the unfounded allegations of the head of the Ugandan delegation, which were intended to lead us to believe that these attacks were launched from Rwandese territory. This is simply the

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

thesis of the Patriotic Front of Rwanda, which is attacking my country. The reality is that the Patriotic Front has no bases in Rwandese territory. Its incursions against the civilian population are carried out from Uganda, where these armed elements have been based since 3 October 1990. This is the reality: the Patriotic Front is based not in Rwanda but in the territory of Uganda.

I should like to reaffirm solemnly, on behalf of the Government of Rwanda, what I said in my speech to the General Assembly on 7 October 1991. Rwanda is engaged in efforts to find a final solution to the problem of Rwandese refugees, which has been our constant concern since this phenomenon began. We unreservedly subscribe to the declaration of the Heads of State of the region concerned, meeting in Dar-es-Salaam on 9 February 1991, regarding a solution to the problem of Rwandese refugees.

We await with great interest the plan of action that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Organization for African Unity were instructed to draw up. This will be submitted for our consideration next year.

We subscribe fully to political dialogue with the Rwandese Patriotic Front, under the auspices of the mediator, the Head of State of Zaire. We reaffirm that we are wedded to a policy of good-neighbourliness. We shall never depart from that, and we expect that the same readiness will be expressed by our neighbours.

Rwanda would like to thank all neighbouring countries that have consistently indicated understanding and their readiness to help at this difficult time in its history. We should like to take this opportunity to thank all those countries and international bodies that have constantly been

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

concerned about the situation. Rwanda would like to reaffirm its undying attachment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. MARKU (Albania): In exercising the right of reply on 7 October, the representative of Greece emphasized that the 1989 census in Albania had never been recognized by Greece. Nonetheless, this does not alter in the least the character of the census, which was held on the basis of the principle of the free expression of nationality by all citizens - a universally accepted criterion in this regard. I mention this detail not because it is unknown but to make it clear that, when they talk of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Greeks, the Greek representatives - not out of ignorance, of course - take the Orthodox population of Albania, who live in different parts of the country, as being members of the Greek minority settled in Albanian territory.

Identifying religion with nationality, and putting the two on a par, would be absurd. This logic would mean that all Catholics living in Albania were Italians, French or Germans, that all the Muslims there were Turks or Arabs, that Orthodox Slavs were Greeks, and Irishmen were Poles, or vice-versa. In other words, there would be no Albanians in this small world. Taking nationality for religion would not be a serious argument, in support of whatever claim. What is more, the Albanian Orthodox population has its own mother tongue, culture and tradition, which differ completely from those of the Orthodox Greeks.

The representative of Greece underlined also the fact that there are ethnic Greeks in other parts of Albania. That is true. In Tirana proper - the capital of Albania - there live the families of 80 university lecturers,

(Mr. Marku, Albania)

of ministers and of high-ranking officials from a Greek minority of about 60,000. A few Greeks live in other cities, where, even under the former totalitarian regime in Albania, they achieved high positions in the local organs of power. They are all included in the 1989 census.

As for the rights of the Greek minority in Albania, I do not intend to enter into details. As I have pointed out previously, their representatives participate in all State and governmental structures. They have their own party, which is represented in the Albanian Parliament. This the Greek Government knows very well from the contacts it has had with them recently, both in Tirana and in Athens.

The representative of Greece cannot ignore, or with one statement dismiss, the question of the Albanians of Cameria. Here, we are thinking not about the large Albanian cultural and linguistic community, who recently aroused the interest of the European communities also, but about the Albanian people living in Cameria, who have for years been subjected to deportation, eviction and mass slaughter - especially just after the Second World War, when they were forced to abandon their homes and properties under the threat of ruthless physical annihilation.

According to the Greek representative, these people had committed crimes during the war, in collaboration with the Fascist and Nazi invaders. Can anyone point to an episode in history when children in cradles, pregnant women and sick old folk committed crimes in collaboration with invaders? Even if such crimes had been committed, the barbaric behaviour, mass slaughter and massacres committed against these people could in no way be justified.

(Mr. Marku, Albania)

That the Cami population fought, side by side with Greek and world resistance movements, against the Fascist occupiers was recognized by the Allied Powers. The fact that they did not flee their native land voluntarily was placed on record by representatives of the United Nations and of the then United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, who, during the period 1945-46, helped the Cami people who had been forcibly evicted from their ancient lands in Greece to settle in Albania.

Today these thousands of Albanians from Cameria demand the right to visit, and eventually to return to, their own lands, but they are not permitted to do so. As a historically recognized entity, they demand to be granted all the rights stipulated in the documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe - namely, the Paris Charter and the Copenhagen document - as well as in the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. Marku, Albania)

They also demand that the Albanian population, which has been expelled by force from their own ancient lands, should enjoy the same rights as the Greek minority in Albania. These demands have been made public and presented to the Greek side, including the Greek Prime Minister, by the representatives of the Cami population in Albania. Neither is this unknown to Mr. Samaras, who in a meeting with the Albanian Foreign Minister in June this year declared that the Cami issue needs to be studied in depth.

It is not an unknown fact that Albania is in an extremely difficult situation. We would not like any country, still less a neighbouring country, to take advantage of this situation in order to impose unfounded claims on Albania.

As a neighbouring country of Greece, Albania wishes to have good and friendly relations with that country.

Mr. MORA GODOY (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): In the statement made in the plenary meeting this morning by the representative of Sweden he referred to my country, saying that "Cuba is one tragic exception" in Latin America. (A/46/PV.29, p. 74)

We should like to know what tragedy he was referring to, because we cannot recall any earthquake, volcanic eruption, hurricane or other disaster having occurred in Cuba recently. We were surprised that when he referred to Cuba he did not mention in any way the brutal aggressive policy being carried out against a small country by the most powerful imperialist country in the world; that is what true tragedy is.

It would be regrettable if a country with which we have traditionally maintained respectful and fruitful relations of friendship should join the anti-Cuban campaign, whose origin everyone knows.

Mr. LONGCHAMP (Haiti) (interpretation from French): The Haitian delegation has taken note that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic devoted almost his entire speech this afternoon to Haiti. We thank him for his kind words about Haiti, but we must make some comments.

In the first place, with regard to the idea that the Haitian Government is conducting a campaign against the Dominican Republic, we would like to point out that the Government of Mr. Aristide was in office for less than seven months. If there is such a campaign, it was several years old when the Organization of Human Rights, labour organizations and even film makers began to document the situation of Haitian labourers in the sugar industry. There is a well-known book by Maurice Lemoine, entitled Sucre amer (bitter sugar). The current Haitian Government was neither able nor in a position to finance such a campaign. However, we must recognize the existence of a situation concerning Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic. We did not invent it, and at this stage we highly recommend that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic read a book on the situation whose Spanish title is La isla al revés, written by Mr. Joaquin Belaguer, in which the current President of the Dominican Republic recognizes how ill-treated the Haitians are in his country. Furthermore, in October 1990, recognizing the same situation, the Dominican Republic issued a communiqué on measures for improving the situation of the Haitians living in the Dominican Republic.

We have taken note of the desire of the Government of the Dominican Republic to harmonize relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. We were very pleased and we hope that the first steps will be taken in that direction. However, we have also taken note that the Dominican Government believes that the presence of the Haitians in the Dominican Republic

(Mr. Longchamp, Haiti)

represents a burden that it cannot bear alone. What we are asking of the Dominican Republic is that it settle migration problems in accordance with international norms. We have had instances of Haitians living in almost all parts of the world who were sent back because of irregular situations, but never have Haitians in any country been treated as they are in the Dominican Republic. Of this we have proof furnished by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) when two of its representatives noted the repatriation of Haitians at the border with the Dominican Republic.

In June 1991 the Dominican Republic issued a decree, without consulting the Republic of Haiti, by which it expelled from its territory all Haitians under the age of 16 or over the age of 60 who were not in a regular situation. Since then they have expelled more than 50,000 Haitian citizens whose circumstances were not in accordance with the terms of the decree and were much older than 16 and under 60 years of age. Among them we found people who had lived in the Dominican Republic on a regular basis and were working in Dominican State industries.

If the Government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide had asked that compensation be given it was not as blackmail but simply in conformity with international rules as compensation for losses incurred not only for lost property but also for assets lost by Haitians who had been irregularly repatriated to Haiti. We noted with irony that the Dominican Republic is incapable of accepting all Haitian workers who lived in the Dominican Republic given the abundance of Dominican workers. This is quite correct. However, the fact that the Dominican Republic thinks that the first point of an agreement with Haiti concerns the sending of Haitian workers for the Dominican sugar industry makes us smile.

(Mr. Longchamp, Haiti)

I wish to reiterate here the words of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of the Republic of Haiti, that never again shall the blood and sweat of Haitians working in the Dominican Republic be converted into bitter sugar. Haiti and the Dominican Republic are the two wings of a single bird, as the President of Haiti pointed out. We are aware of this and we should like to work towards a definitive peace between our two countries.

We are awaiting in all good will a gesture from the Dominican Republic.

Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda): The representative of Rwanda, again in his statement this afternoon, continued to level accusations, bordering on slander, against Uganda, my country. I will handle the allegation of the representative of Rwanda much more gently than he dealt with the facts.

My Minister, in the course of his statement this morning, clarified the situation and outlined the position of the Ugandan Government on the whole question of Rwanda and the attendant refugee question. The main allegation of the representative of Rwanda is that Uganda has given bases to the Rwandan Patriotic Front and that it is giving them logistical support. Nothing could be further from the truth.

There are regional efforts to solve the problem of Rwanda, including the efforts of various regional heads of State and regional meetings. We have a mediator, President Mobutu. The current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) is now involved in similar efforts, as is the Secretary-General of the OAU.

Uganda has been fully cooperative with these efforts. In fact, we have gone the extra mile to help Rwanda solve its internal problems. As we have pointed out before, Uganda has allowed Rwanda to station a military monitoring team in Uganda to verify its allegation. Similarly, we have allowed the OAU monitoring team on our territory. They have not been able to verify the hyperbole to which the representative of Rwanda has treated this Assembly.

Neither the Rwanda monitoring team nor the OAU monitoring group has been able to locate any of the bases on which the Rwanda representative spent so much time. Indeed, in his report, the Secretary-General of the OAU thanked Uganda for allowing them to visit the areas they wished to see and was able to report that they did not see any rebel bases.

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

Our region, and particularly my country, has made enormous sacrifices to assist Rwanda. I think we need to know whether Rwanda is really serious about trying to assist the regional efforts and whether it really wishes these regional efforts to continue. We take it that by electing to raise this issue at this level, they have lost confidence in the regional efforts; we in Uganda are ready to cooperate with the regional leaders and regional efforts in solving the Rwanda problem.

Essentially, the problem of Rwanda, which gives rise to this crisis, is the failure of the Rwandese Government to accept the inalienable right of its people to return to their home country. The refusal of the Government of Rwanda to receive those of its citizens who may wish to go back is, to my mind, morally indefensible and legally untenable.

At one stage, the pretext advanced by the Government of Rwanda for refusing to allow them to go back was that they did not have enough land. I believe the representative of Rwanda was in contact with my Government trying to plead that case. This excuse reminds me of a harsh parent who harasses his children, forcing them to flee to neighbouring houses, and then refuses to have them back, arguing that his house is too small to accommodate them. But he does not stop there; then he begins lecturing his neighbours on the virtues of neighbourliness. That is the position we find ourselves in with Rwanda.

We believe we have made quite an effort by keeping the Rwandese refugees in our country since 1959 and all efforts by the international community to assist Rwanda have come to nought.

In the course of this general debate, most speakers have emphasized the

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

importance of countries not hiding behind the barrier of sovereignty to violate the inalienable rights of their people. Definitely, a basic inalienable right is the right of an individual to return home.

Having listened to the representative of the Rwandese delegation, I wish to pose the same question once again: Is the Rwanda Government really ready to deal with the regional efforts concerning their problem or does it wish to raise this issue at forums beyond the regional level? My delegation will be happy to cooperate with all efforts to that end.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate what my delegation stated this morning. We, the neighbouring countries of the region which have quite a lot of Rwandese refugees, while not expecting the Rwandese Government to be grateful for all the humanitarian assistance we are extending to them, do not expect it to be provocative.

Mr. ROCHEREAU de LA SABLIERE (France) (interpretation from French): In his statement, the Vice-Prime Minister of Fiji felt that he should cast aspersions on my country because of the nuclear tests that it carries out on his territory, in French Polynesia.

My delegation would like to recall that the underground nuclear experiments carried out by France in no way damage the interests of the States of the region, the environment or the health of the population. This has been amply demonstrated by the numerous studies carried out *in situ* by scientific commissions, both national and international, and recently again by the results of a mission that was carried out in March 1991 by three international agencies, one of them related to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

(Mr. Rochereau de la Sabliere, France)

I would add that, in connection with these tests, my country has a policy of broad dissemination of information, and it intends to continue to pursue that policy.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have concluded our consideration of agenda item 9.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have just heard the last speaker in the general debate of the forty-sixth session, which began on Monday, 23 September, and took 27 meetings. During the course of that debate, we had the privilege of listening to 24 Heads of State, 10 Prime Ministers, 10 Deputy Prime Ministers, 94 Foreign Ministers, 5 Deputy Foreign Ministers and 19 Chairmen of delegations, a total of 162 speakers. This virtually universal participation, at the very highest levels, once again demonstrates the unique nature of this global forum and underscores the importance that the world community attaches to the General Assembly. The presence and participation of such a large number of eminent statesmen and world leaders is a clear affirmation of their commitment to the United Nations and its Charter. Through their eloquent statements and interventions during this general debate, they have expressed a common determination to strengthen the role of the United Nations so that it can become a major factor of global stability in a rapidly changing world.

Nearly all the statements that were made in the general debate emphasized the growing need for the United Nations to play a larger and more pivotal role in the evolving new world arrangements, as an irreplaceable global institution for the promotion of peace, justice and international cooperation, based on the fundamental principles of the Charter. The general debate has demonstrated a common acknowledgement among Member States of the positive relaxation in international tensions and a common desire to work towards the peaceful settlement of outstanding disputes, the strengthening of

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international peace and security, the amelioration of underdevelopment and poverty, and the exploration of new approaches to deal with the proliferation of socio-economic, environmental and humanitarian problems. The attention of the General Assembly has clearly been focused on the primary concerns of the international community at this delicate stage in world affairs.

The deliberations during the general debate were characterized by a deep awareness of the problems confronting the world community, a strong desire for dialogue and mutual understanding, and, overall, a constructive and productive attitude. Here, I should like to express my appreciation for the constructive position adopted by delegations during the general debate; I hope that this positive atmosphere of cooperation will grow even stronger during the course of this General Assembly session.

At the conclusion of the general debate, may I also thank all members for the excellent cooperation extended to me and the Vice-Presidents in the conduct of our proceedings, and for their dutiful compliance with the modalities and organization of our work, which were commonly agreed upon at the start of the session. I am confident that I can continue to rely on members' cooperation and support, particularly in making it possible for me to commence meetings punctually.

May I also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar; the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs, Mr. Ronald Spiers; and all the members of the Secretariat staff for the excellent cooperation they rendered me during general debate. They have been a tremendous source of support to me in my work.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the delegations which congratulated me on my election to the

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presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly and for the kind words addressed to my country as an expression by the international community of its confidence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In acknowledging their good wishes, I wish to reaffirm my pledge to do my best to justify the confidence members have reposed in me. In my work, I look forward to the continued cooperation of all members and I am confident that with their support and constructive participation we can make this General Assembly session a great success.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.

UNITED
NATIONS

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Forty-sixth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 10 October 1991, at 3 p.m.

Corrigendum

Page 1 (a-z) should read:

- General debate [9] (continued)

  Statements by

  Mr. Pursoo (Grenada)
  Mr. Dumbuya (Sierra Leone)

  Address by the Honourable Tofilau Eti Alesana, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Western Samoa

  Statements by

  Mr. Ndong (Equatorial Guinea)
  Mr. Jaakson (Estonia)
  Mr. Taveras Guzman (Dominican Republic)

- Statement by the President

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